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On Changing Africa….

According to Perry, 1989, except for Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia and South Africa, most of Africa was ruled by foreign powers in 1945. After World War II, independence movements swept through Africa. Inspired by a new awareness of their heritage and by ideals of self-government learned in their studies abroad, black leaders in Africa began to develop political parties that put pressure on European powers to grant their colonies independence. In 1957, Ghana was the first colony to gain self-rule. In the next decade, other British and French colonies also became independent (Perry, 1989).

Since the 1920s, African nationalism had grown steadily. Nationalists supported political freedom as well as pride in traditional culture (Karpiel, Krull & Wiggins, 2012). Many nationalist leaders, especially in the British colonies, were educated in Europe. The colonial powers had hoped to train them as colonial officials. Instead, they used their Western education in the fight against imperialism. Many risked prison to win freedom. For example, newspaper editors were often arrested.

In the early 1950s, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana led nonviolent protests and strikes against the British rule. The British arrested Nkrumah, but agreed to form an elected legislature. Ghanaians elected Nkrumah to the legislature while he was in prison. He was then released and given a position in the government. Nkrumah began to negotiate with Britain for self-rule. In 1957, Ghana became the first African nation south of Sahara to win its independence after World War II. Nkrumah became Ghana’s first Prime minister (Karpiel, Krull & Wiggins, 2012). In time, most of Britain’s African colony won independence peacefully. Like the people of Ghana, they used nonviolent strikes and protests.

Not all African nations achieved their independence peacefully. Kenya and Algeria were two nations that won independence only after long, violent struggles. Perhaps the most violent battle for independence came in the North African country of Algeria. A French colony since the 1830s, Algeria was home to more than a million French, who opposed self-rule for native Algerians. A guerilla warfare against the French began in 1954. In 1962, Algeria became an independent nation.

By 1975, however, nearly all of Africa was independent, and THE African leaders turned their attention to building strong nations. Besides the problem of developing national unity, they had to find ways to encourage political stability, promote economic development, and educate their people.

South Africa remained a problem to the rest of Africa. Other nations, in Africa and elsewhere, denounced its official policy of *apartheid* – the segregation of whites and nonwhites. They urged the majority rule in South Africa and Namibia, a country that South Africa had ruled since World War I (Perry, 1989).

References:

Perry, M. (1989). *A History of the World.* Mandaluyong City: Houghton Mifflin Company

Karpiel, F., Krull, K., & Wiggins, G. (2012). *My World History.* USA: Pearson Education, Inc.